

an opinion of the moral condition of our species very different from that which is dictated by the divine declarations ? The Governor of all intelligent creatures has spoken of this nation or family of them, as exceedingly remote from conformity to that standard of perfection which alone can ever be his rule of judgment. And this is pronounced not only of vicious individuals, who are readily given up to condemnation by those who entertain the most partial or the proudest estimate of human nature, but of the constitutional quality of that nature itself. The moral part of the constitution of man is represented as placing him immensely below that rank of dignity and happiness to which, by his intellectual powers, and his privilege of being immortal, he would otherwise have seemed adapted to belong. The descriptions of the human condition are such as if the nature had, by a dreadful convulsion, been separated off at each side from a pure and happy system of the creation, and had fallen down an immeasurable depth, into depravation and misery. In this state man is represented as loving, and therefore practically choosing, the evils which subject him to the condemnation of God ; and it is affirmed that no expedient, but that very extraordinary one which Christianity has revealed, can change this condition, and avert this condemnation with its formidable consequences.

Every attempt to explain the wisdom and the exact ultimate intention of the Supreme Being, in constituting a nature subject in so fatal a degree to moral evil, will fail. But even if a new revelation were given to turn this dark inquiry into noonday, it would make no difference in the actual state of things. An extension of knowledge could not reverse the fact, that the human nature has displayed, through every age, the most aggravated proofs of being in a deplorable and hateful condition, whatever were the reasons for giving a moral agent a constitution which it was foreseen would soon be found in this condition. Perhaps, if there were a mind expanded to a comprehension so far beyond all other created intelligences, that it could survey the general order of a great portion of the universe, and look into distant ages, it might understand in what manner the melancholy fact could operate to the perfection of the vast system ; and according to what principles, and in reference to what ends, all that has taken place within the empire of the Eternal